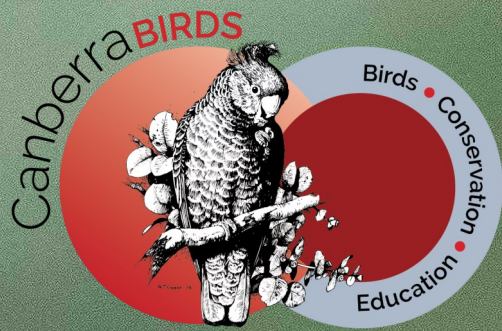




Gang-gang

Canberra Ornithologists Group Inc

Canberra Birds Newsletter

AUGUST 2026



Azure Kingfisher, ACT, February 2026, *Trevor Costa*

AUGUST MEETING

Wednesday 12 August 2026

7.30 pm

Bugang Room, Denman Village Community Centre, 5 Felstead Vista, Denman Prospect

As detailed below there has been a change in venue for the COG/Canberra Birds monthly meetings for 2026.

Speakers for the 12 August meeting will be:

Zachary Flegg - Canberra Bird Blitz Summary

Jurian Hoogewerff - Introduction to technical aspects of ecoacoustic recording

Zachary Flegg - Nightjars in the Cotter - Methods, Findings and Ethical Implications

Change of meeting venue for COG/Canberra Birds

Until further notice the venue for our 2026 monthly members' meetings will remain the Bugang Room at the Denman Village Community Centre, located at 5 Felstead Vista, adjacent to the Denman Prospect shops (see Google Maps link <https://maps.app.goo.gl/NqW3XrN5iJf8dzRe9>)

This is a light, spacious, modern event venue with a kitchen. There is plentiful parking, under lights, close to the door and with several disabled parking spots outside the door. The room is on the first floor, accessed by two flights of stairs or by a lift.

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Everyone Welcome

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To help guide you once there the Canberra Birds Sandwich Boards will be outside the front door.

For people attending the meeting by public transport, the R10 bus provides a very good service around every 15 minutes from the ANU through Civic to the Denman Prospect shops with the bus stop opposite the venue. For example, a bus runs to there from 6:57 to 7:23 pm and return buses at 9:05 or 9:35 pm arriving at the ANU at 9:31 and 10:01 pm, respectively.

At the August meeting there will be three presentations, the first a shorter one than usual, then followed by 2 longer presentations on aspects of bioacoustics recording.

The first will be by Gang-gang editor **Zachary Flegg** providing a “**Canberra Bird Blitz Summary**”.

The Canberra Birds Blitz is a long-running annual survey project that began in 2005 and aims to cover the entire range of the ACT; providing a snapshot of the species that call the region home. In recent years, the project has been left without a coordinator, leading to what has now been termed the “Bird Blitz, *lite*”. This quick presentation aims to provide an overview of the species detected during the last few years of the survey, changes in methodology and provide a call for coordinators.

The next speaker will be **Dr Jurian Hoogewerff** of Hoog Consulting on “**Introduction to technical aspects of ecoacoustic recording.**”

Ecoacoustics encompasses a wide range of sound domains; geophony, biophony and anthrophony. Bioacoustics focusses on how animals make use of sound and how they respond to all sounds. Most animals have a similar frequency hearing range as humans about 20 Hz to 20 kHz or slightly higher but produce sound in a constrained range.

Recording sound pressure waves requires a sensitive variable pressure sensor, a microphone, to translate the small air movement into a variable electric current. The weak low voltage signal from the microphone needs to be amplified.

The amplified signal is nowadays converted to a digital signal, using an analog to digital converter, an “ADC”. The ADC sampling rate needs to be at least twice the highest required sound frequency (so-called Nyquist frequency) to obtain a useable digital representation. Another key parameter in the digitisation is the resolution in which the amplitude of the sound wave is sampled, called the bit depth. A 16-bit bit depth gives $2^{16} = 65,536$ steps resolution and is the typical CD quality. The digital data stream is subsequently captured by writing to a file on a disk or memory stick.

The first complete-package all-weather battery-operated time-lapse sound recorders (microphone + amplifier + ADC + sd card writer + CPU) that were easy to operate were the “Songmeters” made by Wildlife Acoustics in the USA in 2007 at a A\$1500 price point. Since then, competitors, like Frontier Labs from Brisbane in 2011 have come on the market and driven significant quality improvements. In 2017 the open source Audiomoth recorder set a new standard for cheap miniature recorders (A\$100) and other manufacturers are copying and improving the design and capabilities. In the presentation more technical details and software to inspect the large amount of data produced when recording in time-lapse mode for weeks will be explained.

This will be followed by **Zac Flegg** on “**Nightjars in the Cotter - Methods, Findings and Ethical Implications**”

This presentation overviews a recent research project run over the summer of 2025-2026. Using Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM), the **White-throated Nightjar** and other nocturnal species were recorded. This project was a direct response to recent records within the COG Area of Interest (Aoi), combined with a lack of quality data surrounding local Nightjar stay and calling patterns. The project successfully recorded a total of 112 distinct species. This included regionally interesting species such as **Powerful Owl**, **Red-capped Robin** and **Brush Bronzewing**. This underlines the potential application of audio recording as an environmental monitoring tool.

One key finding of the project was high levels of playback use around the Cotter during the study period - often for hours at a time and for almost a quarter of the study period. At a time when Nightjars are known to breed, the potential impact of this action cannot be overstated. This presentation will conclude by outlining the outcomes of the project. This includes the development of a custom AI model training for Nightjar call recognition.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2026/2027

Many thanks to the members who have renewed their membership for this financial year. There are still many yet to renew their membership for 2026/27.

New or renewing members should complete the online membership form which can found on our website and transfer payment to the Canberra Birds bank account.

The information from the membership form will be transferred to a database which will provide an ongoing up-to-date record of our members.

If you have any queries, please contact prue.watters@gmail.com.

Prue Watters
Membership Officer

Summary/analysis of the past month and what to watch out for in August

The often-cloudy weather, with high overnight temperatures, with further moderate rain events, continued for the first 3 of the 4 weeks from 24 June to 21 July covered by this column. It then dried out in the final week, with the first severe frosts for the winter, but also some unseasonably high maximum temperatures. My analysis below supports my impression that bird activity in the COG Area of Interest (Aoi) continued to be very low, as is typical for mid-winter. Except for a few individuals the usually near complete spring/summer migrants have all left, and few of the less common altitudinal migrants seem to have moved in, possibly due to the warmer than usual weather. Reports of “unusual” species were again very low.

Highlights

There were no special “unusual” species that drew much of the attention during the period. There were some further reports of the single **Brown Gerygone** at the Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR (JWNR), and with continued reports there of the **Spotted Harrier**.

Spring/summer migrants

Of the spring/summer migrant species still present in the previous period, there have been no further reports of the **Shining Bronze-cuckoo** last reported on 24 May. In contrast the **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, the least migratory of our local cuckoos, was still reported from 8 locations (for another unusual gathering – see below), slightly up from the previous period. There was a confirmed report of an **Australian Reed-Warbler** from the JWNR on 8 July (none in the previous period), and **Tree Martins** were still reported from 6 locations (2 in June) to 8 July, with the maximum numbers being 10 birds at the Nadjung Mada NR and near the Hyatt Hotel on 24 and 26 June, respectively.

The **Noisy Friarbird** was reported from one location (as for previous period) with a bird reported at Zosterops Corner on 19 July, possibly an early returning bird, whereas **Rufous Whistlers** were still recorded from 3 locations (as for previous period), a bird at Campbell Park on 27 June, and 2 birds at the Nadjung Mada NR on 6 July as well as the ANBG on 10 July.

The **Dusky Woodswallow** was reported from 3 locations (4 in previous period) again in particular from the JWNR, from where up to 12 birds were reported to 4 July. There were also 2 birds reported from the adjacent Fyshwick Sewage Treatment Plant (FSTP) on 25 June and 3 birds (returning?) at the Bedulluck TSR off the Barton Hwy on 19 July. Up to 2 **Olive-backed Orioles** were still reported from 7 locations (4 in previous period) throughout the period.

In contrast the **Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike** was still reported from up to 20 locations (30 in previous period) and **Grey Fantails** still from up to 60 locations (75 in previous period). It seems clear that at least some of the above 8 species are overwintering as are **Mistletoebirds** recorded from 8 locations (20 in the previous period) and **Superb Parrots** recorded from up to 60 locations (around half S of the lake) compared to 50 locations in the previous period.



Brown Gerygone, Jerrabomberra Wetlands NR, 13 May 2026, *John Hurrell*



Spotted Harrier, Canberra Birds' Photo Gallery, 22 June 2011, *Tobias Hayashi*

So, during August please keep an eye out for the above spring/summer migrants. Towards the end of the month please also look out for the **Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo**, **Pallid Cuckoo**, **Western** and **White-throated Gerygones** and **Fairy Martins**, which are amongst the first such species to return.

Autumn/winter altitudinal migrants

Of the species that spend spring/summer the mountains and higher country but return to Canberra and its surrounds in autumn, **Scarlet Robins** were reported from up to 40 urban/peri-urban locations (down from 50 in the previous period). The **Flame Robin** was reported from up to 20 such locations compared with 15 in the previous period. While we have found them difficult to find on the SW side of Cooleman Ridge, others have found up to 20 birds there; clearly, they are moving around.

The **Rose Robin** has been reported from 3 urban/peri-urban locations only (as for previous period), a single bird at the ANBG on 25 June, Campbell Park on 27 June and Mt Ainslie on 9 July, as well as a report of 1 bird at the Molonglo Gorge on 1 July and of 3 birds from the Cotter Reserve on 19 July. Again, there have been no confirmed **Pink Robin** sightings during the period, with the closest location being E of Melbourne.

The **Crescent Honeyeater** has continued to be slow to move in, with only true urban/peri-urban report being of a single bird at the ANBG on 30 June, all other reports being from 7 locations on or to the W of the Murrumbidgee River. **Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters** were reported from 2 locations (compared with 6 in the previous period), one bird at the Stromlo Woodlands on 24 June and 1 at the JWNR on 16 July.

Up to 2 **Bassian Thrush** were observed the ANBG throughout the period with up to 3 birds also reported from the New Chums Rd on 27-28 June. No **Olive Whistlers** were reported throughout the period (1 location previously). There have also been no confirmed reports **Swift Parrot**, with the closest location now being the Shoalhaven area.

There were a couple of further reports of the single **Brown Gerygone** at the JWNR to 10 July, including within a mixed species feeding flock (with **Weebills**, **Yellow Thornbills**, **Grey Fantails**, **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**), but there have been no confirmed reports of it at the ANBG, the usually favoured location, so far this winter.

During August, please keep an eye out for the species mentioned above (as well as the **White-eared Honeyeater** and **Golden Whistler** which are often quieter before they leave) anywhere in the COG Aol before they start to move away.

Unusual species

As for June there were no “unusual” species reported from the COG Aol during the period that deserve special attention.

Again, there were no **Magpie Geese** or **Plumed Whistling Duck** reported during the period. **Freckled Duck** were reported from 2 locations only during the period (4 in previous), with up to 2 ducks continuing to be present at the JWNR to 10 July, and one seen on the Lake Bathurst survey on 19 July (none there on 14 June).

Australian Shelducks were not reported from within the ACT (1 in previous period), but outside they were reported from around 12 locations (15 in previous period) stretching from the NE round to the SE of the ACT, with the highest numbers being the 36 ducks on the Wollogorang Rd on 25 June, with single figures at all other locations. There were just 3 ducks on the Lake Bathurst survey on 19 July plus 6 on the Morass (43 and 10 ducks there, respectively on 14 June).

Blue-billed Ducks were reported from 6 locations during the past month (as in previous period), with up to 8 ducks at the Upper Stranger Pond from 25 June to 3 July and up to 4 ducks at the FSTP to 17 July. The highest numbers were the



Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Mount Taylor NR, ACT, 15 July 2026, *Linda Wilson*

284 ducks at the Wheatley VC Rest Area at NW Lake George on 1 July, with the 142 at the nearby Badcoe VC Rest Area on 26 June the next highest. The 44 ducks reported from the Lake Bathurst survey on 19 July were much lower numbers than the 126 ducks there on 14 June.

Musk Ducks were reported from 5 locations in the past month (3 in previous period), with up to 2 ducks reported from the Upper Stranger Pond from 25 June to 3 July. The highest numbers were the 33 ducks from the Lake Bathurst survey on 19 July, plus one duck at the Morass (50 and 1, respectively on 14 June). The other locations were up to 8 ducks at Rows Lagoon and a male on Yerrabi Pond on 19 July.

There were no **Stubble Quail** reported during the period (1 location in previous). **Brown Quail** were reported from 5 locations (4 in previous period), with the maximum being 6 quail reported from the West Belconnen Pond on 27 June. Again, no **Painted** or **Little Button-quail** were reported during the period.

A **White-headed Pigeon** was reported from the Ridgeway above Queanbeyan on 3 July, and a **Peaceful Dove** was reported from Garran on 27 June, but no **Brown Cuckoo-Doves**, **Brush Bronzings** or **Diamond Doves** were reported during the period. There were also no **White-throated Nightjars** reported.

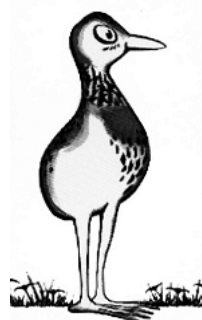
There were again no **Baillon's Crakes** reported during the period, but **Spotless Crakes** were reported from 3 locations (5 in previous period), with up 1 bird at the JWNR on 15 July. There were up to 5 crakes reported from Sutherland Park in Taylor from 11-18 July, as well as 2 crakes from Bango on the very N edge of the COG Aol on 19 July. There were no **Australian Spotted Crakes** reported during the period (1 location in the previous).

Buff-banded Rails were reported from 2 locations (3 in previous period), with up to 2 birds from the ANU on 14-15 July, and a single bird from the Hall Village and Showground on 17 July. **Lewin's Rails** were reported from 4 locations (2 in previous) with single rails at Taylor on 27 June, at the JWNR on 5 July, in Majura Lane on 14 July and at Bango on 19 July. The **Black-tailed Nativehen** was not reported during the period.

There were no **Double-Banded Plovers** recorded on the Lake Bathurst survey on 19 July (compared with the 9 there on 14 June), but there were 13 **Red-capped Plovers** (21 there on 14 June). **Pied Stilts** were reported from 3 locations (as for previous), from 2 spots on NW Lake George with a maximum of 100 birds from the Badcoe VC Rest Area on 26 June (just down from previous) followed by 27 from the Wheatley VC Rest Area on 1 July. There were 4 birds at the SW end of Lake George on 4 July as well as at Rows Lagoon on 11 July.

No **Pacific Golden Plovers**, **Red-necked Avocets**, **Banded Lapwing**, **Australian Painted-snipe**, **Comb-crested Jacana**, **Red-necked Stint**, **Sharp-tailed**, **Pectoral** or **Common Sandpipers** were reported during the period. Also, no **Caspian Tern**, **Whiskered** or **White-winged Black Terns** were reported.

There were no confirmed reports of the **Great-crested Grebe** during the period (4 locations in previous), and again, no **Australian Little Bittern** or **Australasian Bittern** were reported during the period.



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Again, no **Little Egrets** or **Plumed Egrets** were reported during the period. In contrast **Great Egrets** were reported from 15 locations during the period (16 in previous), all but two within the ACT/Queanbeyan area. **White-necked Herons** were reported from 3 locations (down from 7 in the previous period), single birds at the Bungendore Rd Bywong on 4 July, at the big dam in Mulligans Flat NR on 11 July and at Rowes Lagoon on 4 and 19 July.

Royal Spoonbills were reported from 4 locations during the period (up from 2 in the previous), with single birds at Badcoe VC Rest Area on 30 June and the JWNR on 19 July, 2 birds at Rowes Lagoon on 28 June, and 6 birds at the Morass on 19 July. **Yellow-billed Spoonbills** were reported from 5 locations (as in previous), with 6 birds at the Lake Bathurst survey on 19 July (7 on 14 June). Single birds were recorded at the farm dam on the Sutton Rd on 28 June and the Wollgorang Rd on 19 July, 2 birds were at the SW end of Lake George on 4 July, and 7 birds at the Badcoe VC Rest Area on 17 July. No **Glossy Ibis** were reported during the period.

An **Eastern Barn Owl** was reported as seen in flight on the Federal Highway alongside Gorooyarroo after dark on 15 July, but no **Powerful Owls** were reported (1 location each in previous period). Around midday on 17 July I found an **Australian Boobook** quietly sunning itself from a hole in a large gum on Coleman Ridge and was later surprised that there had been no other reports of this species for the past month, though there were reports from 2 locations later that evening. While they had been reported from possibly the same tree hollow around 2 years ago, I found it an unexpected location, with most reports resulting from being alerted during the day while being mobbed in dense foliage, or when heard calling after dark.

Black-shouldered Kites were reported from up to 21 locations in the period, well up from the 12 in the previous period. The **Spotted Harrier** was reported/photographed from the JWNR a number of times between 4 -21 July, and was photographed flying very low over the ponds at the nearby FSTP on 17 July. It was also videoed at the Ginninderry Conservation Corridor on 27 June (2 locations in previous period). A **Black Kite** was reported from the Roundabout on the Barton Hwy on 27 June, and a **Black Falcon** was reported from the Federal Hwy Lake George, also on 27 June. However, no **Grey Goshawk** or **Pacific Baza** were reported from anywhere in the COG Aol during the period.

Azure Kingfishers were reported from 3 locations (as in the previous period) during the period with single birds at the Cotter Reserve/Cotter Bend on 30 June and 11 July, one at the nearby Cotter campground, also on 11 July, and 3 birds photographed on rocks etc at the lower overlook on the Molonglo River (near the Sewage Treatment Plant) on 12 July. No **Red-backed** or **Forest Kingfishers** were reported during the period.

No **Glossy Black-Cockatoos** or **Cockatiel** were reported during the period. Shorty heard a **Scaly-breasted Lorikeet** fly over his place in Symonston on 13 July and then saw 2 fly low overhead on 17 July. They were heading S but turned right and headed towards Callum Brae NR. Shorty noting that if anything was in flower at the reserve it would be worth checking there, but there have been no reports so far. **Musk Lorikeets** were reported from 4 locations (3 in previous period), single birds at the Shepherds Walking Track on 1 July, at the National Arboretum on 12 July and Callum Brae on 18 July, with 2 birds at Cook on 17 July. However, no **Turquoise Parrots**, **Little** or **Purple-crowned Lorikeets** were reported over the period.

White-fronted Chats were reported from 4 locations in the period (3 in previous), with up to 3 birds at the Coombs Pond on 8-9 July, and 2 birds on a farm dam on the Sutton Rd on 28 June. There were 17 birds on the Lake Bathurst survey on 19 July (3 on 14 June) but the 29 birds at the Wollgorang Rd farm dams on 24 June were the highest numbers. **Blue-faced Honeyeaters** were reported from 4 locations (3 in previous period) within the previous boundaries, with the 2 birds at the Parkes foreshore on 5 July, and then in Barrine Drive on the opposite side of LBG on 15 July. There were also 2 birds reported from Wanniasa on 10 July and from the Yass Caravan Park on 30 June. However, no **Spiny-cheeked**, **Singing**, **Scarlet**, **Lewin's**, **Brown**, **Striped** or **Painted Honeyeaters**, **Little Wattlebirds** or **Little Friarbirds** were reported during the period.

Coffee and Chat at the Gardens Tuesday, 11 August

You are invited to Canberra Birds monthly Coffee and Chat at the Australian National Botanic Gardens cafe.



Come along any time between 9:30 and 11:00 on the second Tuesday of the month.

All welcome – experienced birders, new and would-be birders, locals and visitors.

Look for the table with the binoculars on it.

Red-capped Robins were reported from 4 locations (up from 1 in previous) with up to 2 birds continuing to be at the Nadjung Mada NR. There were up to 2 birds at the Molonglo Gorge from 2-4 July, at least 2 birds on the Bracks Hole Rd on 4-5 July, and a single bird at the Mulligans Flat NR car park on 9 July. However, no **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren**, **White-browed Babbler**, **White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike**, **Australasian Figbird**, **Apostlebird**, **Black-faced Monarch**, **Tawny Grassbird** or **Zebra Finches** were reported during the period.

Jacky Winters were reported from 3 locations over the period (compared with 7 in the previous). These were all to the N of the ACT, with single birds at Mulligans Flat NR on 24 June (and 2 on 20 July), and on the Namina Rd at Springrange on 19 July, with 2 birds at the Namina TSR (both new sites) that same day.

Hooded Robins were reported from 4 locations (5 in previous), again all to the S of Canberra, with 5 birds at the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd on 25 June (and one there on 11 and 20 July). On 20 July 2 birds were reported from the Bumbalong Rd Colinton with 2 more along the Murrumbidgee River further down this road. In the past this has been a good spot to find this species. Kym Bradley also reported 5 birds (3 females) at her spot to the S of the ACT.

Restless Flycatchers were again reported from just 1 location only during the period (as in the previous), one bird at the Nelanglo TSR from 5-6 July. Again, there were none reported from the S of the ACT, similar to earlier in 2026.

The **Brown Treecreeper** was reported from 4 locations during the period (as for the previous), with again 1 bird being reported from the Kama NR/The Pinnacle NR area. Other known sites include up to 6 birds were reported from the Nelanglo TSR to 17 July, up to 3 birds at the Naas Rd at Apollo Rd between 25-30 June, and 1 bird on the Namina Rd at Springrange (a new location) on 19 July.

Reports of “unusual” species remained low over the period with again very few reports of pigeons/doves, parrots and honeyeaters and other passerines.

In keeping with this some much more common birds have largely been absent this winter from my local area of Chapman/Rivett, Cooleman Ridge, Narrabundah Hill and along the Molonglo River at Coombs. These include the **Striated Pardalote** (and with very few **Spotted**) and the **Yellow-faced Honeyeater**. There have also been very few **Red Wattlebirds**, in particular away from the suburbs, possibly due to the lack of any winter flowering gums. In contrast **Brown Thornbills** have been quite conspicuous, including in small flocks feeding close to the ground, and giving a range of calls, some of them quite unfamiliar.

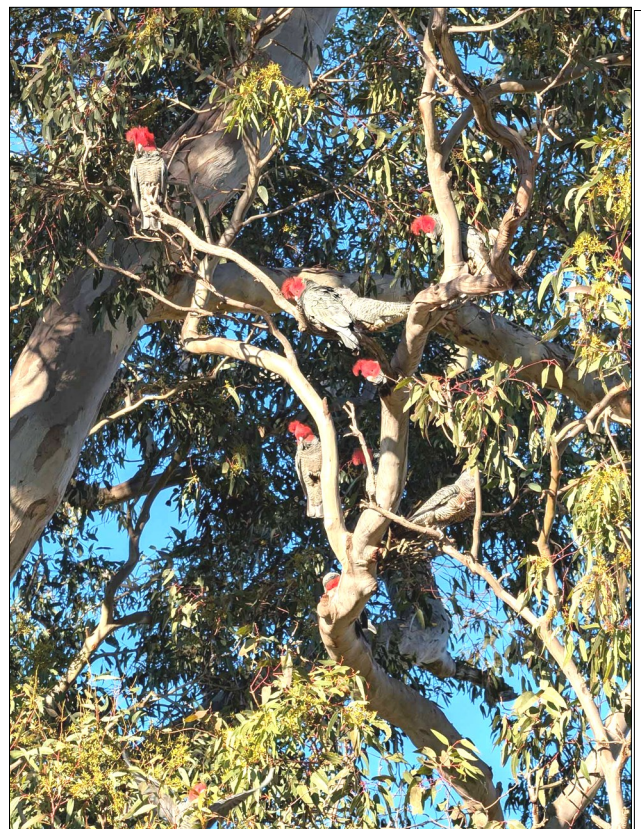
Breeding

Some mid-winter breeding has come to my attention, with **Black Swans**, which are all year-round breeders, being reported on nests or with cygnets. **Australian Wood Ducks** have also been reported calling from trees as they often do in winter before breeding in a hole. I've also seen an **Australian Raven**, which are also early breeders, leave a known nest site.

On 7 July 4 **White-winged Choughs** were collecting nesting material from the soggy ground below the dam at the extreme NW end of Cooleman Ridge and taking it to a tree in the horse paddocks where they have bred in the past, but not recently. On 11 July two **Red Wattlebirds** were observed copulating on my side fence. I have also seen at least 10 different male **Superb Fairy-wrens** in full breeding plumage in my local area of Cooleman Ridge/Narrabundah Hill over the past month

Flocks, including of migrating birds

While there have been some signs of the breeding season commencing Andrea and I have continued to observe mixed



Gang-gang Cockatoo, Watson, ACT, 17 July 2026,
Nick Payne

feeding flocks (MFFs) in our local area. Others have reported them too, notably on 1 July when Harvey Perkins found a very large MFF during his Woodland survey at Red Hill. This consisted of **Spotted Pardalotes, Brown and Buff-rumped Thornbills, Silvereyes**, an immature **Golden Whistler**, a male **Scarlet Robin**, a **White-eared Honeyeater** and two **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**. Harvey noted that the cooperative spirit was only bolstered by their detection and very vocal concerted mobbing of a **Collared Sparrowhawk** which eventually flushed and flew off.

On 19 July during their winter Woodland survey in the southern half of Goorooyarroo NR, Steve Holliday and Prue Buckley encountered a very large MFF with the main species noted as being **Yellow, Brown, Yellow-rumped and Buff-rumped Thornbills, Grey Shrike-thrush, Golden Whistler, Grey Fantail, Brown-headed and White-eared Honeyeaters, White-throated Treecreeper, Weebill**, and **Spotted and Striated Pardalotes**. Also, an incidental mixed flock encountered while travelling through the reserve included many of the same species with the addition of **Speckled Warbler and Willie Wagtail**.

On 10 July I counted 26 **White-winged Choughs** to the rear of the Chapman houses on Cooleman Ridge, the most I have seen on the ridge for a number of years. After initially being alerted by their calls, the birds were found feeding on the ground in a pretty tight group, 50 m off the track. Very unexpectedly and most unusually when I got close to count them, suddenly well over half flew towards me and settled all around, as if expecting to be fed. They certainly weren't at all threatening; I can't recall a similar experience with this species. Shortly after when back on the track an **Australian Magpie** flew down to the ground and stood 1 m in front of me, also as if expecting to be fed.

Last but certainly not least, on the morning of 26 June Doug Liang reported an unusual observation for the time of year at the ANBG; with up to four **Fan-tailed Cuckoos** calling loudly and excitedly and possibly chasing each other. He wondered if they were overwintering juveniles practising a bit of vocal mimicry, or late departures for points north tricked by the warmer than usual weather. While as noted above they are the least migratory cuckoo species in the COG Aol, it is indeed a very remarkable observation rivalling the recent one of 4 **Fan-tailed Cuckoos** by Julian Robinson at the Callum Brae NR in February as published in the June 2026 issue of Canberra Bird Notes. Interestingly Julian's birds seem to have been silent and most importantly he didn't realise there were 4 birds until he closely examined all his photos.

While the last month of winter, August is also the first month when movement usually starts to pick up. Things should improve considerably from the very quiet winter so please watch out for any further overwintering spring/summer migrants as well as the first species returning, for the altitudinal migrants before they start to leave, for late MFFs and single species flocks, for roost sites and flights, and for any late winter breeding activity. As usual please ensure that all significant sightings are properly reported and end up on the COG database.

Once again, my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to my two main data sources, posting on the COG/Canberra Birds e-mail Discussion List ("COG chat line") and the eBird Australia database, as well as direct correspondence with me. As always, I am very grateful to all involved for publishing this information without which it would not be possible to put this column together.

Jack Holland



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Waterbird surveys and Avian Flu

In association with the Office of Nature Conservation (ONC), Canberra Birds is running a survey on the lakes and waterbodies in urban Canberra.

The aim of the survey is to obtain background information on numbers and distribution of waterbirds using the lake and to monitor the effects of avian flu (H5N1) if and when the virus arrives in the ACT.

Monitoring points have been set up on Mulligans Flat Dam, Yerrabi Pond, Gungahlin Pond, West Belconnen Pond, Lake Ginninderra, Lake Burley Griffin, Jerrabomberra Wetlands, Lake Tuggeranong, Upper Stranger Pond and a couple of the local urban dams. In addition, Spinnaker Island on Lake Burley Griffin and the Gungahlin Pond island are also being monitored.

The survey started in January, involves five members and is conducted once a month. It is envisaged that the survey frequency will be revised in 12 months and will increase in frequency once the virus is detected in the local area.

For further information contact Chris Davey (Survey coordinator)
email: daveychris12@gmail.com

Summary of the 8 July meeting

The short presentation was by Philip Veerman on “An exposé of the story of the description of new subspecies of Australian birds in *Canberra Bird Notes*”.

Philip described his involvement in one of the most unexpected and yet important items ever to have been published by COG in *Canberra Bird Notes* (CBN), which as he showed was still quite an undeveloped production in terms of hand-drawn graphics and maps, the inclusion of photographs etc, compared to today’s much more professional version.

Philip was editor at the time, and it began with a phone call from Dick Schodde seeking to publish something urgently in CBN as he feared he was going to be gazumped for the publication of 12 sub-species of Australian birds in a soon to be published book, *The Birds of New South Wales, A Working List*.

As he had the December 1988 issue of CBN nearly ready, Philip was able to include Dick’s complete text quickly, with the issue being published in early 1989, before the book came out.

Philip described how the authors criticised this, calling the CBN as not a proper publication as it was in a type-written format and with a very limited circulation. In turn Philip showed a copy of their book which didn’t appear to be any more professional, and it also attracted limited attention.

Also, it could rightly be accused of plagiarism of Dr Schodde’s work which was public knowledge at the time. It was also inaccurate as it included the **Sarus Crane** and the **Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo**, both of which do not occur in NSW.

Following Philip’s presentation Dick Schodde was able to confirm the importance of the publication which has since been quoted widely in the international literature highlighting COG’s involvement. Importantly all the new subspecies, except possibly one, are still being accepted over 35 years later, during which time there have been many changes to taxa.

Once again, on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members, many thanks to Philip for the very interesting presentation giving his side of the story and alerting us to this very important event in the past history of COG.

For readers wishing to read about this issue in more detail Dick Schodde's initial article can be found in *Canberra Bird Notes*, 13 (4) pp129-132 (December 1988). His response to the publication of the NSW book is in *Canberra Bird Notes*, 14 (4) pp91-92 (December 1989). Both are available through the Canberra Birds web site.

The main and very interesting presentation was by Dr Laura Rayner on "An update of Superb Parrot research" at our meeting on 8 July. As she has done previously, Laura delivered this very confidently and enthusiastically, with very good humour and clear slides.

She updated us in four areas, the first being the results of their monitoring. Windfarm funding has allowed them to set up many sites in the SW Slopes Important Bird/Key Biodiversity Area which were all able to be visited in 2024 and 2025 with an increasing number of birds monitored and sites able to be classified into occupied breeding, occupied non-breeding, passing through etc.

While the results are still being analysed, it has already allowed a much better understanding of the **Superb Parrot** range, greatly assisted by the tracking of 45 birds, resulting in 26,077 GPS points. This has also shown that the birds move independently, some staying put while others moved much further away, with the biggest distance travelled so far being 290 km over 2 days. Birds have also been shown to fly very fast, up to 109 km/h and at a 37 m average height, surprisingly higher when breeding.

Apart from discovering a new breeding site, it has also allowed study of foraging resources around nests, with the Riverina birds needing to move much more widely to find food for their young, in contrast with the birds in the ACT being able to find food much closer, with other breeding sites in between these two.

Remote camera monitoring showed that local nest predation was very high in the wet years of 2020 and 2021, where flooded nests resulted in chicks moving to the entrance allowing them to be taken by **Australian Ravens** etc. As the weather dried out things improved before an influx of Brush-tailed Possums into the ACT nest area resulted in very heavy predation. Collaring 8 nest trees in 2025 showed this to be very effective, with no possum predation of protected nest trees.

Finally, Laura has tested whether nest boxes, successfully used for **Orange-bellied** and **Swift Parrots**, might improve breeding success. A study of the literature on nest boxes has shown an example of **Superb Parrots** successfully using one in Orange. Also, it has underlined that the design must have the specific species in mind, previous work having shown that **Superb Parrots** have very tight preferences.

A study of nest boxes erected in Nature Reserves around Canberra showed 40% were in a poor or dangerous condition and the preliminary conclusion is that they may be short-term replacements only for **Superb Parrots** and not likely to be an effective long-term solution. This has resulted in the drafting of Conservator Guidelines to manage nest boxes across the ACT.

Finally, Laura indicated that the top of her priorities is that it is vital to protect nest trees in the ACT, including putting them on the ACT Tree Register. Interestingly all known nests in the ACT are in live trees, whereas elsewhere **Superb Parrots** often nest in dead trees. The creation of future habitats for them is also vital.

Once again, on behalf of COG/Canberra Birds members, many thanks to Laura for giving up some of her very valuable time to give this very interesting and wonderful update on research on the **Superb Parrot**, a favourite bird for many of us. We wish her the very best for the future successes of this very important program and would love to have her speak to us again once she returns to work from maternity leave.

Jack Holland

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Field Trip Reports

Sunday 5 July – The Link to Shepherds Lookout and Return.

Thirteen hardy souls braved the chilly weather to meet at 8am behind the Link, Strathnairn. This walk took us through a diverse mix of native grasslands, open box-gum woodland, Black Cypress Pines (*Callitris endlicheri*) and some non-native artistic metal sculptural plants.

Our endeavours were rewarded with sightings of 29 species of birds including many of the usual suspects – **Galahs**, **Australian Magpies**, **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** and, sadly, too many **Common Starlings** in the mix. There were plenty of **Superb Fairy-wrens** happily chattering amongst the blackberries and smaller shrubs. The **Eastern** and **Crimson Rosellas** were undaunted by the cool weather with several of them sighted together with their friends, the **Red-rumped Parrots**. Not to be outdone, the **Australian King-Parrot** was also heard although not sighted this morning. The absolute highlights though had to be the sighting of a pair of **Peregrine Falcons** swooping from the rock ledges above the Murrumbidgee to explore its reaches and potential nesting havens further downstream. The group won't forget the delights of also encountering **Little Corellas**, a **Masked Lapwing** and a couple of **Pacific Black** and **Australian Wood Ducks** enjoying the dams alongside a lone **Australasian Grebe**. While the wind was definitely chilly, the spectacular views from Shepherd's Lookout down over the confluence of the Murrumbidgee and Molonglo Rivers, made up for it all. On our walk we also encountered one brave **Weebill** (defying the cold) and a couple of **White-plumed** and **White-eared Honeyeaters**.

The delightful familiar song of two **Grey Butcherbirds** accompanied us as we finished up our walk. A lovely day to be out and about in the Nation's Capital. Thanks must go to Chris Davey for organising the walk, to Sandra Henderson for leading us and to Lia Battisson for doing the eBird list.

Terrylea Reynolds

Wednesday 15 July – Mt Taylor NR

Ten of us met near the start of the track on Colquhoun St. As people were arriving **Galahs** and **Rainbow Lorikeets** were checking out tree hollows and enjoying the winter sun on upper branches around the parking area. Starting down the track there was a large dead tree where half a dozen **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos** were posed photogenically, all facing in the same direction with their crests erect and squawking stridently.

The cause was a **Brown Goshawk**, also perched in a patch of sun, in a nearby eucalypt. After we had all had a good look, the goshawk flew off, now pursued by a rabble of cockatoos and Galahs that had found their courage once the raptor



Sulphur-crested Cockatoo. Mount Taylor NR, ACT, 15 July 2026, *Linda Wilson*



Brown Goshawk. Mount Taylor NR, ACT, 15 July 2026, *Linda Wilson*

was leaving. Following the track north parallel to the highway, there were **Weebills** feeding in the small trees and low bushes beside the track, with **Superb Fairy-wrens** active in the long grass and low bushes. The two dams attracted only a pair of **Australian Wood Ducks** feeding on the surrounding grass. Past the second dam we turned to follow the powerline track back south. Beyond the wide cleared area beneath the powerlines, the edges of the woodland produced **White-eared Honeyeaters**, **Red Wattlebirds**, a **Scarlet Robin** and two **Speckled Warblers**. Just past the track to the summit, we cut downhill towards the first dam. There was a group of 20 **White-winged Choughs** feeding beneath the trees beside the track. We then cut back south through some woodland and across an open grassy area past **Australian Magpies** and **Magpie-larks** to the start.

The total count from the walk on a beautiful sunny winter's day (following two cold, drizzly ones) was 150 individuals of 25 species. Many thanks to Sandra Henderson for leading the walk and to Lia Battisson for recording the eBird list.

Hugh Sweatman



Canberra Birds' members, Mt Taylor NR, ACT,
15 July 2026, *Linda Wilson*

Sunday 19 July - Nanima TSR and Bedulluck TSR

On a bright, frosty winter morning, Bill Graham led a group of 9 on a very pleasant outing to two Travelling Stock Reserves (TSRs) between Hall and Murrumbateman.

We began at Nanima TSR which includes a stand of magnificent eucalypts, then opens up as it runs down to Murrumbateman Creek. While the morning started slowly with few observations apart from numerous **Australian Magpies** and **Superb Fairy-wrens**, there were no complaints about the soundtrack provided by the former.

A pair of **Jacky Winters** were observed in good light. They stayed close to the group for some time and within range for the rest of the morning. Bill recounted how they were included in a group of birds including whistlers and shrike-thrushes described colloquially in the past as 'thickheads' for their appearance and 'stickybeaks' for their lack of reticence in the company of humans.

A pair of **Varied Sittella** was another highlight and a **Brown Thornbill** was detected building a nest. Other small birds included **Red-browed Finch**, **Weebill**, **White-browed Scrubwren**, and **Striated**, **Yellow-rumped** and **Buff-rumped Thornbill**. **White-throated Treecreepers** and **Brown-headed Honeyeaters** were also seen. A female **Collared Sparrowhawk** was observed at intervals circling above the canopy. By morning tea, a total of 28 species had been observed.

To find Nanima TSR, turn right from the Barton Highway along Nanima Road, then turn left at the T-intersection with Murrumbateman Road. After about 5 minutes, you will find the gate into the TSR beside the impressive industrial-scale steel gate to the neighbouring property.

After morning tea, the group moved along to Bedulluck TSR, which is a strip running along the Barton Highway towards Murrumbateman from the intersection with Nanima Road. It has been heavily replanted, providing good cover for birds, and also provides an excellent vantage point over the neighbouring open country.

A total of 22 species were observed, including 3 **Dusky Woodswallows**. A large group (16) of **Red-rumped Parrots** was found, along with **Little Corellas**, **Crimson** and **Eastern Rosella**, and **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo**. Small birds included **Superb Fairy-wren**, **Striated**, **Brown** and **Yellow Thornbill**, **White-plumed Honeyeater** and **Striated Pardalote**. Bedulluck was a good area for raptors: a pair of **Wedge-tailed Eagles** were soaring overhead, a **Nankeen Kestrel** was spotted in the distance and a **Brown Falcon** was observed circling close to the highway.

Thanks to Bill for organising another outing to interesting new spots on Canberra's doorstep, and thanks to Lia Battisson for keeping the bird list again.

Evan Bitmead

Future Field Trips

COG Trips

Each participant must register prior to their chosen trip with their name and contact number and, before proceeding on the trip, must comply with the participant's responsibilities (wording follows). An emergency contact name and phone number are required.

"I declare that I am capable of undertaking the trip having discussed with the Trip Leader any limitations I have (e.g. medications, physical), assessed the risks to myself and my property, and ensured that I am adequately equipped. I will follow the instructions of the Field Trip Leader, and advise them before moving away from the group."

New birders and visitors are welcome. If you do not have your own binoculars, COG can lend you a pair, so please advise the trip leader when you register.

Changes to trips are notified on:

the COG chatline <http://canberrabirds.org.au/publications/discussion-email-list/> and trips page of COG website <http://canberrabirds.org.au/category/trips/>.

A reminder that COG has a long-standing policy to give preference to members for field trips that can accommodate only a limited number of people

Do NOT attend if you have tested positive for Covid, have been a close contact within the past 5 days, or have any Covid, cold or flu symptoms.

Sunday 2 August – Percival Hill NR

This reserve includes areas of Yellow Box - Blakeley's Red Gum Grassy Woodland. We will focus on the western side, including the trig point and dam. Possible birds include **Scarlet Robin**, **Golden Whistler** and a variety of honeyeaters.

We will walk between 2 to 3 kms on different surfaces, including rough rocky tracks, finishing by 12:00. Wear sturdy boots, a hat and take water and morning tea. Trekking poles would be useful.

Meet at Schown Pl entrance (off Temperley St, Nicholls) at 09:00.

Register at mrgtrbrtsn14@gmail.com by 31 July with your name and mobile number, and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Margaret Robertson

Sunday 16 August – Glendale Depot, Namadgi NP

Meet at 8am at Namadgi Visitor Centre (Naas Rd, Tharwa) for carpooling to the depot.

Glendale Depot is a very good hotspot within Namadgi National Park. Highlights at this time of year may include a variety of cuckoos, **Brown-headed** and **Crescent Honeyeaters**, **Jacky Winters** and a wide variety of other woodland species. The walk will be partly on tracks, but there will be some wandering through grassland. There are some slopes to be walked, but of course we'll be walking very slowly. We'll be there around three hours, with an estimated return to the Visitor Centre by noon. As usual, ensure you have sturdy shoes, sunscreen, hat and water.

Register with Mark at markjtindale@yahoo.com.au with your name and mobile number, and the name and number of an emergency contact by 14 August.

Mark Tindale

Wednesday 19 August – Mt Rogers NR

Meet at 9am at the Reserve carpark off Wickens Pl, Fraser.

It is some time since the Wednesday walkers visited this reserve and we could expect **Common Bronzewing** and **Superb Parrot**. The tracks wend across and around the hill and we may visit the trig point. As usual, wear sturdy footwear, and take water and a hat.

Register at mrgtrbrtsn14@gmail.com with your name and phone number and name and number of your emergency contact.
Margaret Robertson

Sunday 30 August – Umbagog District Park, Latham

Description: Umbagog District Park has Ginninderra Creek running through the middle of it. Canberra Birds last had a field trip there in September of 2023. It will be an easy walk of 4-5km over flat ground.

Meeting place: Meet in the car park off Florey Dr, 250 metres south of Herron Cres, opposite 87 Florey Drive.

Meeting time: Meet at 8:20 for an 8:30 start.

End time (approx.): 11:30

What to bring: Water and Water and a snack, if desired, sunscreen, a hat and sturdy shoes.

Name of leader and contact details: Please **register** with the leader, by email to liabattisson@outlook.com, providing your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. Do so **before 7pm on Friday 28 August** as numbers will be limited to 15.

Lia Battisson

Sunday 6 September – Mt Majura and Mt Ainslie NRs

Description: A walk through mixed Eucalypt woodland along the lower slopes of the southern end of Mt Majura, possibly onto the northern end of Mt Ainslie. Target species would include woodland birds such as **Scarlet Robin**, **Speckled Warbler**, **Buff-rumped Thornbill**, and possibly some early migrants if the winter is as warm as predicted.

eBird hotspots: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L1436201>

Meeting time and place: 8 am Mackenzie Street Gate, Hackett, literally 2 houses north of Grayson St on the east side of the road, parking in the lot or on the street <https://maps.app.goo.gl/WRKKcaVnEsx7HFEy7>

Walking distance: 2-4 km depending on the birds

Degree of difficulty: medium - we will probably be off trail for much of it but the walking is fairly open and relatively flat

End time (approx.): 10:30 am

What to bring: water, morning tea, hat, sunscreen, good birding vibes

Registration: Participants must register by email to peter.miller4722@gmail.com by 6:00 PM Friday, Sept 4, providing their name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact; please use the email to register

Numbers limited: yes to 20

Peter Miller

Sunday 13 September – Gale Precinct, Queanbeyan

This is an interesting area near Googong which includes a known rock climbing site (White Rocks) and I believe is looked after by Landcare.

Meet at 8.00am at the roadside parking area about 500m along Wickerslack Lane from Old Cooma Rd. This walk will be partly off-track to White Rocks, then back along a track to the cars. As usual, wear sturdy shoes and a hat.

Register with Sandra (shirmax2931@gmail.com) with your name and number, and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Sandra Henderson

Sunday 20 September – private property north of Gundaroo

We will visit a private property where the landholders have undertaken significant revegetation over the last 10 years, and where we are likely to find a variety of woodland birds. We will be walking up to 4 kms depending on the weather and the birds, on different surfaces, including rough rocky tracks and off track with some hills.

Meet at Sutton Primary School at 7.30am for carpooling. We will be back there by 12:00.

Wear sturdy boots, a hat and appropriate clothing for the weather. Bring water and morning tea.

Register with the leader Nicki Taws by email ntaws@bigpond.com 0408210736, by Friday 18 September with name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. The trip will be limited to 20 participants.

Nicki Taws

Sunday 27 September - Vanity Crossing Road

On this morning walk we will amble west along Vanity Crossing fire trail from the locked gate in Pierces Creek Forest to the Crossing itself on the Cotter River (3.2km), then return the same way (total walking distance 6.4km). The trail is undulating through tall dry forest with significant shrubby understorey in parts, with a couple of short somewhat steeper sections. There are views to Cotter River as it widens into the reservoir.

Possible birds include the usual forest species as well as **Crescent, New Holland** and (with much luck) **Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters, Speckled Warbler, Wonga Pigeon** and **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**.

Meet at 8am for carpooling at the small carpark on Cotter Road at its junction with Paddys River Road (ie directly opposite Cotter Avenue). Limit 12 people. Late morning end time expected. Bring water, snacks, walking shoes, and walking poles if desired.

Please **register** with Julie at julie.mcguinness@gmail.com and include your name, phone number, and the name and number of an emergency contact.

Julie McGuinness

Macquarie Marshes and Binnaway – a trip in two parts

Part 1: Monday 28 September to Friday 2 October – Macquarie Marshes

Part 2: Friday 2 October to Wednesday 7 October – Binnaway area

On this trip we will be exploring the area around the little town of Binnaway in central NSW on the Castlereagh River. We'll be based in a private property that is a native plant nursery a few minutes out of town.

The trip will take place over the October Labour Day weekend, which hopefully will give working people an opportunity to participate.

Binnaway is around six hours drive from Canberra. We'll aim to arrive on the afternoon of Friday 2 October and leave early on Wednesday 7 October. People are of course welcome to arrive later or leave earlier.

The itinerary is loose at the moment but will likely include:

A day exploring the property, which is a haven for honeyeaters.

A day exploring the Binnaway region.

Day trips potentially to Coonabarabran, the Warrumbungles and/or the Pilliga.

There is space to camp on the property. There is a small number of bedrooms in an unoccupied second house on the property which can be claimed by whoever gets back to me first. There is also affordable accommodation in Binnaway at the Railway Heritage Barracks: <https://www.facebook.com/binnawayrailwaybarracks2395/>

Binnaway sits near the boundary of the Great Dividing Range and the western plains and is on the Castlereagh River so there should be a good variety of birds. It will be spring so there should also be a good selection of returning migrants. It's also wildflower season and our hosts are wildflower experts so we should get good tips on the best sites to visit.

The number of participants will be capped at 16.



The eight card designs:

- **Australian magpie** at the National Arboretum Canberra
- **Australian white ibis** at the National Carillon, Canberra
- **Bush-stone curlews** at Mulligans Flat Woolshed
- **Crimson rosellas** at the National Gallery of Australia Skyspace
- **Galahs** at the Balloon Spectacular
- **Gang-gang cockatoos** at City Hill
- **Rainbow-crested cockatoo** at Black Mountain Tower
- **Tawny frogmouths** at Shine Dome

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But wait, there's more! Before Binnaway I'll be visiting the Macquarie Marshes, which are a huge Ramsar wetland in northern NSW. I'll be camping at Willie Retreat, a cattle station on the edge of the marshes that offers powered (\$40) and unpowered campsites (\$30) and bathroom facilities: <https://willieretreat2824.wixsite.com/willie-retreat> There's meant to be good birdwatching at Willie Retreat itself, with **Brolgas** and **Glossy Ibis** and even sightings of **Australasian Bittern** and **Australian Painted Snipe**. However, staying there provides access to several other great activities in the marshes:

It's about 20 minutes' drive from Burrima Boardwalk. Built by local landowners and conservationists, the 2km long boardwalk allows you to walk out into the marshes. It's a great spot. I visited about four years ago and have been wanting to go back ever since. The cost per car is \$25 but I think you can get multiple visits for that: <https://burrimamacquariemarshes.com/>

Macquarie Marshes kayak tours. These guided paddling tours get you out into the middle of the marshes, which are normally inaccessible. The price for a 2 ½ hour paddle is \$150: <https://www.macquariemarsheskayaktours.com.au/>

NSW NPS Macquarie Marshes wading and walking tour. As the name suggests, this is a walk through the marshes themselves where you get wet... This activity costs \$30: <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/guided-tours/macquarie-marshes-wading-and-nature-walk>

The kayak and wading tours are only held in spring. The wading tour is not offered every day and it looks like Tuesday 29 October is the only date that will work for us. It's up to you to book accommodation and activities for yourselves but I'm planning on the following itinerary:

Monday 28 Sept: drive to Willie Retreat, probably via Parkes (around 7 hours).

Tuesday 29 Sept: wading/walking tour in morning, Burrima boardwalk in afternoon/evening and spotlighting.

Wednesday 30 Sept: morning kayak tour. There is also an afternoon/evening one which I might do as well. There are only four participants in each session (six if we go as a group) so don't leave booking until the last minute!

Thursday 1 October: general birding including Burrima boardwalk.

Friday 2 October: relocate to Binnaway via Gilgandra, which has some birding opportunities (around 3 hour drive).

You are very welcome to just do the Macquarie Marshes or the Binnaway half of the trip.

Of course, everything will depend on the fuel situation. We had to cancel the planned Easter camping trip to western NSW earlier this year due to fuel shortages and uncertainty. Hopefully we'll have better luck this time. It probably makes sense to carpool if possible. I can fit one or two people and their gear in my ute, but you would need to work with my itinerary. I can also put people looking to carpool in touch with each other.

If you have questions, feel free to contact me on 0418 264 868 or at pickelbarrel@gmail.com

Marcus Hellyer

Sunday 4 October - Lake Road and Bungendore Common

Description. Lake Road includes farmland, a large farm dam, woodland, grassland and the southern end of Lake George. Species observed include **Red-browed and Double-barred Finch**, **Swamp Harrier**, **Red-kneed Dotterel**, **Australian Shelduck** and **Rufous Whistler**. We will have lunch at Bungendore Common with wetlands that have contained **Australian Darter**, **Yellow-billed Spoonbill** and **Chestnut Teal**.

Meeting Time and place. Spotlight carpark, 6 Bungendore Road, Queanbeyan at 7.30 am for carpooling.

Suggested contribution to the driver \$10.

Degree of Difficulty: Easy.



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Email: freddy@feathersnfriends.com.au

Walking distance: Lake Road 1 km, Bungendore Common 2 km. Approx end time 3.00pm.

What to bring: Water, morning tea, lunch, hat and sunscreen

Participants must **register** with the leader by email to bsgraham1948@gmail.com by Friday 2 October with name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact.

Bill Graham

Saturday 10 October - Australian National Botanic Gardens - beginners outing

This morning walk will be aimed specifically to help beginners and new members identify birds and to learn about their behaviour and calls. The Botanic Gardens are especially suitable for such an outing, as they allow the opportunity to observe a range of local bush birds in a variety of habitats. Due to the available food supply, they are also a relative haven for birds during spring. Anthony Overs will lead this outing, which will consist of a stroll through this lovely part of Canberra for a couple of hours.

Meet at 9.15am at the ANBG bus shelter. **Registration** is essential; please provide your name and mobile phone number, as well as an emergency contact name and number. Book your place with Anthony (0419202155, or anthony.overs@gmail.com), who will be happy to discuss whether this outing is suitable for you. Please make sure to bring your binoculars and field guide. **If you do not have binoculars, please let me know as COG can supply you with a pair to use on the day.**

Note that the aim of the walk is to introduce you to bird-watching, not bird photography, so please leave your camera at home.

Anthony Overs

Sunday 11 October – K2C surveys – Bredbo area

Canberra Birds will continue with the K2C surveys that have been running since April 2010. The surveyed properties have healthy populations of many of the rarer woodland birds such as **Diamond Firetail**, **Hooded Robin** and **Speckled**

Warbler. We will be visiting the same sites to continue the monitoring and see if spring migrants have arrived. The surveys will be undertaken in 'blitz' fashion; that is, observers in small groups will visit a number of sites on one or more properties before regrouping for lunch and a sharing of the survey's findings. Less experienced observers are welcome to join in the survey as each team will have at least one experienced observer. Anyone interested in participating is asked to **contact Nicki Taws before Wednesday 7 October**. Email: ntaws@bigpond.com or 0408 210 736.

Sunday 18 October – Bungendore Travelling Stock Reserves

At the March meeting, member Rainer Rehwinkel gave us a presentation on the birds of three of the Travelling Stock Reserves around Bungendore. Such was the interest, a trip is now offered to several of these Reserves. We will meet at 8:00am and drive on to Bungendore. The walks will be on flat ground, or near so. Wear sturdy shoes, bring a hat and a snack. Finish time is about 12.30pm.

As numbers are limited, please register by email to kimlouiseFarley@gmail.com. Include your name and mobile number, and the name and mobile number of an emergency contact. More detail on the meeting place, etc, will be sent when you register.

Kim Farley

A poster for a nature tour to Sabah, Malaysian Borneo, organized by NatureArt Lab. The poster features a vibrant green bird perched on a mossy branch. Text on the poster includes: 'NatureArt Lab Learn - Be Inspired - Love Your Art', 'Borneo 12 - 25 October 2026', 'Join our exclusive annual small group nature tour to Sabah, Malaysian Borneo, with NatureArt Lab in 2026!', 'Experience the wildlife immersion, nature photography and nature journaling trip of a lifetime - especially designed for bird and nature lovers!', 'Scan for further details: natureartlab.com.au/', a QR code, and 'natureartlab.com.au Image credit: Alan Landford' at the bottom.

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Image credit: Alan Landford

Woodland Surveys – Winter 2026 survey round

compiled by Jenny Bounds

After an autumn period of milder than usual temperatures, winter arrived in early June, but with fewer morning frosts than usual. The survey at the end of June had reasonably good weather overall, with rain then developing.

Note: not all sites are reported.

Acknowledgement

After 23 years, Michael Lenz has stepped down as the woodland survey coordinator at the Mt Ainslie NR/Campbell Park sites. This has been a very significant commitment and contribution to this important long-term survey; the woodland surveys commenced at this location in June 2003. Thank you very much Michael.

Brian Grinter takes over from Michael. Brian is also a regular on the Mulligans Flat woodland survey team.

Mulligans Flat NR

Jenny Bounds and the team did the quarterly survey on Sunday 28 June. With several of the regular team away, a smaller than usual group managed to cover the survey. It was not ideal, with overcast conditions from a low intensity system coming down the coast and edging into the region bringing intermittent, very light misty conditions, and a few minutes of light rain during the morning. Hardly anything showing on the rain radar! However, conditions were calm, little wind.

Four of the 24 sites had no birds recorded, not unusual for winter. Site 3 near the Woolshed was the standout with 17 species from a large, mixed feeding flock in and immediately around the site, including **Brown-headed** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**, both **Pardalotes**, a **Grey Fantail**, **Scarlet Robin** and 4 of the **Thornbills**. Seven **Superb Parrots** flew through site 3 during the count, not stopping in the site. Overwintering **Grey Fantails** were recorded at 4 sites, and **Scarlet Robins** at 4 sites. Other highlights included: **Grey Currawongs** at 4 sites on both east and west sides of the reserve, 2 **Varied Sittellas** in woodland at site 17, several **Golden Whistlers** and **White-eared Honeyeaters** around (usual for winter), and 25 **Silver Gulls** near the large dam. A highlight was a **Whistling Kite** which several of the group got a brief view of above trees, (not enough to confirm ID), but Jack and Brian had good views of this on their circuit which includes near the large dam. A total of 38 species, on the low side of winter average, and the same as winter last year; 39 species in winter 2024.

Goorooyaroo NR (southern area)

Steve Holliday and Prue Buckley did the winter survey in good sunny weather, although frosty initially, and quite wet underfoot in places, with pools in creek lines and dams fairly full. 34 species were recorded across the reserve (compared to 30 on the equivalent survey last year), with 26 of these found during our point counts.

Sites were mostly quiet with few small birds present, especially those dominated by **Noisy Miners**. Exceptions were sites 8 and 9 where good numbers, probably from the same large mixed flock, were present. The main species noted were **Yellow**, **Brown**, **Yellow-rumped** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills**, **Grey Shrike-thrush**, **Golden Whistler**, **Grey Fantail**, **Brown-headed** and **White-eared Honeyeaters**, **White-throated Treecreeper**, **Weebill**, and **Spotted** and **Striated Pardalotes**. An incidental mixed flock encountered while travelling through the reserve included many of the same species with the addition of **Speckled Warbler** and **Willie Wagtail**. Interesting absentees included raptors and robins, and for the first time ever on these surveys, **Eastern Rosellas**.

Mt Majura NR

The surveys were conducted at the 9 sites, by John Goldie and Kathy Walter over 3 still, beautiful winter days. The majority were surveyed on 21 June, with follow up sites on 24 and 25 June. Fog until lunch time on the 21st, meant a later than usual start and may have impacted on the numbers of species seen. A total of 19 species overall. All sites were relatively quiet, with virtually no small bush birds other than a lone **Brown Thornbill** and both **Pardalote** species. A highlight was a **Satin Bowerbird** in one of the sites which they have not recorded on the surveys previously. There were around 8 **Welcome Swallows** flying low and feeding in the paddock before getting to site 6, which seemed rather late for them to still be here.

Mt Ainslie NR/Campbell Park

The survey was conducted on 22 June by Michael Lenz and Brian Grinter. The morning started off with fog but developed into a fine, sunny morning as they progressed. The most widespread species were **Crimson Rosellas**, **Weebills**, **Australian Magpies** and **Noisy Miners** which were detected in at least 5 of 9 sites. Other less common species included **Varied Sittella** (Site 9), **Scarlet Robin** (site 9), **Mistletoebird** (site 8), and a **Wedge tailed Eagle** (site 7) that rose up into the sky from its perch on top of a dead gum. There were also some significant flocks of **Gang-gang Cockatoo** (7 birds at site 1) and **Superb Parrots** (11 birds at site 3).

39 species were observed during the survey, 30 species during the site counts, and a further 9 species while walking between sites, including 4 **Flame Robins** along the boundary with Majura grasslands. The number of species observed were up in comparison to last winter (22 species).

Red Hill NR

Harvey Perkins did the survey on the morning of 29 June in a brief, rain-free window of opportunity. Conditions were very dull with some light drizzle/mist early on, but bird activity was generally good. Diversity (32 species) and total numbers (292) were both pretty typical for a winter survey (means over 28 years of 29.4 and 293), with 27 species recorded within sites and an additional 5 between sites.

Activity at sites varied quite significantly (not unexpected) with site 4 this time providing most excitement due to a mixed feeding flock - **Spotted Pardalotes**, **Brown** and **Buff-rumped Thornbills**, **Silvereyes**, an immature **Golden Whistler**, a male **Scarlet Robin**, a **White-eared Honeyeater** and two **Yellow faced Honeyeaters**. The cooperative spirit was only bolstered by their detection and very vocal concerted mobbing of a **Collared Sparrowhawk** which eventually flushed and flew off. Five species of honeyeater were recorded, **Eastern Spinebill**, **White-eared** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters**, **Red Wattlebird**, and **Noisy Miner**.

Diversity and numbers of small bush birds was probably better than normal, but parrot/cockatoo numbers, which are generally a feature of Red Hill surveys, were surprisingly low. A quartet of **Corellas** (**Little**, **Long-billed** and **Little x Long-billed hybrid**) was again staking out the hollows in the large Blakeley's Red Gum at site 9. Other early suggestions of breeding intent included several pairs of **Australian Wood Ducks** up in trees, including one being seen off by an indignant **Galah**.

Newline

Sue Lashko surveyed on 20 June on a mild (9-11 degree) morning, under initially cloudy skies with sun appearing in the last hour of the survey. The most noticeable thing on arrival was the cacophony of sound from screeching **Rainbow Lorikeets**, with close to 20 birds perched in bare trees in the front paddocks. Further on at Site 7 (their usual stronghold), another 21 perched **Rainbow Lorikeets** were recorded, with others encountered in most sites. It was the highest number of Lorikeets Sue has ever recorded at Newline, their presence even subdued the Noisy Miners.

Over-wintering migrants included one each of **Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike** and **Grey Fantail**. The only winter arrival recorded was a female **Golden Whistler**. Infrequently recorded birds included **Grey Currawong**, **White-eared Honeyeater**, **Grey Shrike-thrush** and **White-throated Treecreeper**. A posse of 27 **White-winged Choughs** was foraging in an area that had been recently cleared of blackberry and boxthorn with just the shredded stalks left behind. This clearing meant that **Superb Fairy-wrens** were absent or in much lower numbers than usual in those sites. **Australian Wood Ducks** appeared to be breeding throughout Newline, and a swooping **Australian Magpie** chased Sue out of Site 1. No raptors were recorded. The species count of 34 was about average for winter surveys.

Tuggeranong Hill NR

Lia Battisson surveyed on the morning of 20 June. It was still and sunny after starting out overcast and cool. At site 3, five **Australian Wood Ducks** made their presence known with much chatter up in a tree, and a mixed feeding flock of large numbers of **Weebill**, **Spotted Pardalote** and **Striated Thornbill** straddled the inner and outer perimeter of the site. Another mixed feeding flock in site 5 included a **Grey Fantail** and a **White-eared Honeyeater**. Five sites had **Weebills** and several had a single **White-eared Honeyeater**. In all, 17 species were observed within survey sites and a further 7 between sites.

Naas Sites

Julie Hotchin did the winter survey on this rural leasehold south of Tharwa on a chilly and clear, sunny morning. The site was fairly green, with water in the dams and on the ground following recent rain. In total 30 species were recorded: 20 species observed at the six sites and a further 10 species between sites.

Surprisingly, only three species were recorded at the first site, which is usually the most active. Medium-large woodland birds were the predominant species recorded at the sites, including plenty of **Australian Magpies**. Parrots included **Crimson** and **Eastern Rosellas** (a flock of about 10 being aggressively harassed by **Noisy Miners** near site 2) and **Red-rumped Parrots**. A small number of **Galahs** and **Little Corellas** were present, **Australian** and **Little Ravens**, an **Eastern Yellow Robin**, and a **Common Bronzewing** heard. Apart from the **Noisy Miners**, the only honeyeater was a **White-eared Honeyeater** calling. Few smaller birds were seen or heard at or between the sites other than a **Superb Fairywren**, **Spotted** and **Striated Pardalotes**, **Weebills** and two **Yellow-rumped Thornbills**. **Grey Teal** and **Australian Wood Ducks** were on or at the dams. Only one **Willie Wagtail** was observed, usually a common presence at this location. A **Jacky Winter** was seen on the fence bordering the drive as Julie left, in the same spot where one was observed on the previous survey. The number of species recorded at the sites (20) was the same as last year, and similar to 2024 (21).



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Stuart & Karen Murnain
Manuela Benson
Tracy Oliver
Katherine Ehmann
Gary Jackson & Colette Corroll
Joel Ogden
Nicolette Scopelliti

NEXT NEWSLETTER

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or

c/- The Secretary, COG,

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Articles should be less than 500 words (300 for reports of 1-day field trips) except by prior arrangement with the editor.

Photographs (prints or electronic) with or without articles are encouraged.

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